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ABSTRACT

Market analysis can provide a mechanism for making needs assessment functional and for focusing program development on constituencies in the community that need to be served. The main goals of market analysis are to generate usable information, document needs, assign priorities, locate resources, and respond to identified needs in a systematic way. A successful market analysis involves a number of steps, which must be carefully planned and coordinated: (1) identifying associations, institutions, agencies, and other organizations that have an impact on the market being served; (2) determining which data already exist with representatives from the market; (3) designing, testing, and implementing the market analysis survey and discussing its results with participating groups; and (4) conducting a follow-up survey to determine whether needs have been addressed and to assess the impact of changes made. At Hagerstown Junior College (HJC), market analyses have proved beneficial to program development and meeting community needs. For example, a market analysis identified the need for a program to train health care personnel, and on the basis of data gathered a degree program was approved. In another case, a program in merchandising was streamlined through an analysis of local needs. Appendices include instruments and findings relevant to two HJC market analyses. (HB)

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
THE USE OF THE MARKET ANALYSIS SURVEY
IN NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A National Conference

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: THE PULSE OF THE COMMUNITY

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia

May 11, 1982

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JC 820 237

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Introduction

In the introduction to his classic work, Studying Your Community, Roland Warren states: "If knowledge is power, as Francis Bacon once asserted, then there is legitimate hope that the power which is to be derived from rigorous study of community phenomena. . .may somehow be enlisted for the enhancement of the values of community living."[1] In its early history, the community college sought to be like the university, apart from the community. As the mission of the community college broadened, commitment to the community which hosted the college increased. Gollattscheck summarizes the role of community education: "Education, in the broadest sense of the word, is the process of facilitating growth, change, and development in people. While education cannot alone solve all community problems, no other solutions to community problems can be lasting or meaningful without education."[2] The process most often used to engage community needs has been the development of programs, credit and non-credit. Program selection has been based, too often, on the perceptions of community college educators without benefit of the rigorous study of the community proposed by Warren.

The 1980s present new challenges for the community college. Matulich presents the essence of the demand. "We are not to be mere pawns who simply react to change, we are not to be mere custodians of the status quo, but we are to be dynamic citizens who weave our community life into patterns that will enhance human potential and foster individual achievement."[3] Perhaps the question to be answered is where do we go from here? The community college is established as a part of American education. It is uniquely suited to being an enabling agent for community development. Yet, attention must be given to a mechanism which will allow the college to become a partner with the community in the process of ongoing development.

This paper presents the market analysis survey as a mechanism which makes needs assessment functional and focuses program development on constituencies in the community which need to be served. Hagerstown Junior College, located in Appalachian Maryland, has been using the market analysis approach for nearly a decade. Techniques for implementing the process, survey design and application, and a case study of two program-related applications will be described.

The Market Analysis Survey

The primary goal of market analysis is to generate usable information. The focus of community-oriented market analysis is to facilitate community input into educational program delivery. If these goals are to be realized, the process of market analysis must be carefully planned. Neuber has defined need as "a necessary or desirable condition, state or situation whose achievement requires supply or relief as judged by a person or group using agreed upon standards."[4] A market analysis is an objective and systematic method of identifying persons or groups and analyzing their needs to determine whether or not they are being fulfilled.

The purpose of conducting a market analysis is to document needs, assign priorities, locate resources, and attempt to respond to the needs identified in a systematic way. To do so requires careful planning. Gollattscheck suggests that what is too often overlooked is the role that various elements of the community play in the process of community development and the important relationships between these elements.[5] The first step in planning for a market analysis is to identify those associations, institutions, agencies, or significant others who have an impact on the market being examined.

Mehallis chides community college personnel for their tendency to "overlook existing data and to charge forth to create new data."[6] Once the nature of the market to be analyzed has been established, it is important to meet with representatives from the market to determine what data already exist. Matulich suggests that joint planning/advisory committees, involving both the college and the community, be established at this point.[7]

Designing the survey requires planning and attention to detail. If possible, the planning/advisory committee should prepare the instrument. At least they should be involved in editing drafts of it. Stark suggests that a pilot test be conducted with representatives from the market to be surveyed. Those chosen will not be in the group actually surveyed. The results should be discussed with the planning/advisory committee to insure that the instrument gathers the data that is needed.[8] The committee is now ready to undertake the survey.

Timing is important for the survey. The determination of the schedule for implementing the survey should be made only after the planning/advisory committee has reviewed activities ongoing in the community. It shouldn't be scheduled, for example, when people are heavily involved in other activities. A relatively short period of time should be allowed for the survey. Actual implementation can and should be completed in three to four weeks. Data tabulation will take an additional week to ten days to complete.

Once the data has been tabulated, the results must be shared with those who participated in the analysis. Further, Brawer suggests that coordination with other agencies or associations can broaden the impact of the data.[9] By soliciting the help and expertise of groups outside the market analyzed, the likelihood of meeting the needs identified is increased.

The final dimension of the market analysis process is follow up. While the data is being translated into programs, planning must be under way for continued market contact. At a six-month interval, survey again. Gather impact data; have the needs been engaged; do groups and individuals feel that their concerns have been addressed. The survey process does not need to be as extensive as the initial analysis; however, the gathering of objective and subjective follow-up data will assure groups and individuals that the college is committed to them.

Market analysis surveying opens doors in the community for creating new structures, developing new programs, and designing new procedures. The analysis process should result in a plan which will allow various segments of the community the opportunity to meet identified needs or initiate desired projects, while creating connections through which various segments can assist one another in engaging significant community problems. This community-of-interest approach comes close to realizing Warren's ideal.

Hagerstown Junior College has been using the market analysis survey process quite productively. Recently two issues arose which necessitated the use of the market analysis. These occurrences will function as a case study of the value of this approach to community development.

Market Analysis: The Action Phase

Mehallis suggests that "rarely have the results of community needs assessments led to any substantive changes in existing programs. . . ."[10] The reverse has been true with HJC. The college initiated a mid-level management program six years ago. The basis for initiating the program was a market analysis survey of the business and industrial segment of the college's service area. Two years ago a perceived need in the management field was brought to the attention of the college. Representatives of the health care industry approached the Dean of Instructional Affairs. They explained that the existing management program did not meet the needs of their industry. They asked whether college personnel would work with them. A planning/advisory committee was assembled with the assistance of the health care representatives. At the initial meeting of the committee, the market analysis survey process was accepted as a way of determining the extent of the need.

The committee identified twenty agencies with special needs for health care management personnel. A survey instrument was prepared and signed jointly by the Dean of Instructional Affairs and the committee chairperson (the director of education at the local general hospital). The reaction to the survey was overwhelming. Fifteen agencies responded; they have an aggregate target population for a health care management degree option that exceeds 400 employees. Further, the market shows a 4% growth factor through 1985. (See Appendix A.) The college prepared and submitted a degree option to the Maryland State Board for Community Colleges (MSBCC). Based on the data gathered by the survey, approval was granted.

Courses were offered for the first time in the fall of 1981. Enrollment exceeded expectations by five percent. In January 1982 college personnel followed up on the initial survey. Participants indicated that the program meets the mid-level management needs of the health care industry. Further, they were enrolling in the program or encouraging their employees to do so. The program is off to an excellent start; a segment of the college's community has had a perceived need met; and the college has entered into another ongoing relationship for community development.

In 1977 the college began an associate degree program in general merchandising. The program was based on a market analysis survey of approximately fifty merchandising concerns located in the college's service area. The program began well, but by its second year, enrollment lagged. College personnel worked with the program advisory committee in an effort to stabilize the program. Economic conditions worsened in Appalachian Maryland; merchandising lagged; and the program was identified by the MSBCC's evaluation process as one that was in jeopardy.

The college's Dean of Instructional Affairs decided that a market analysis survey might provide direction for the program while allowing the college to continue to provide service for the merchandising segment of the college's community. The program advisory committee worked with college personnel in designing a survey instrument. (See Appendix B.) The Dean of Instructional Affairs worked with the Director of the Chamber of Commerce to sensitize the merchandising community to the importance of the survey. Eighty-one surveys were mailed in February 1982. Thirty-four were completed and returned to the college. The data contained in the survey indicates a direction for the college to follow. (See Appendix C.) By making the merchandising program an option of the existing management program and concentrating on offering specific courses to target populations identified by the survey, the college will be able to continue serving the merchandising segment of the community while adhering to the MSBCC guidelines for viable programs.

Conclusion: Getting There From Here

A community is a dynamic social system composed of many interrelated structures. Each of them performs a function which contributes to the status of the system. Market analysis surveys are a useful technique for a college to use in developing programs that empower community groups or confront problems so that the college provides useful support without displacing the group's responsibility for engaging the problem. Further, the survey process can assist the college in developing strategies for continuing service or problem solutions. In essence the survey is a bridge between college and

community which fosters symbiotic problem solving--a way to get there from here.

Stark suggests seven steps to successful surveying:

1. Decide what data must be gathered.
2. Write and refine survey content; questions must be simple, concise, and clear.
3. Test the questions on a sample selected from the segment to be surveyed.
4. Establish a time line for survey implementation, completion, and tabulation.
5. Disseminate survey results widely.
6. Act on findings; surveys are not taken for show.
7. Follow up on surveys to determine validity of the solutions implemented.[11]

This procedure insures getting there in the most efficient manner.

John Hakanson, President of Clackamas Community College in Oregon, summarizes the utility of the market analysis process. It is "a sharing of power among people in education, in service agencies, and in their individual households. . . . This sharing of power is like a sharing of love--the more of it we share, the more there is to go around."[12]

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10. Mehallis. op.cit., p. 1.

11. Stark. op.cit., p. 17.

12. Hakanson quoted in Matulich. op.cit., p. 23.

APPENDIX A

HAGERSTOWN JUNIOR COLLEGE

Health Systems Management
Market Analysis Survey

1. Name: _____

2. Agency: _____

3. Agency Employment Profile:

   A. How many positions does the agency have that supervise or manage the delivery of health services as their primary responsibility?

   Range: 15 to 160, aggregate 585

   B. How many of these positions are or can be filled by persons with less than bachelor's degree training? *435*

   C. How many different job titles are represented in category B? *average of 7*

   D. Please list representative job titles from those referred to in C above.

   assistant executive housekeeper — *fiscal supervisor*

   dietary supervisor — *shift supervisor*

   laundry manager

   assistant director, medical records

   director of recreation

   E. How many new personnel with less than bachelor's degree training will be added to the agency staff: *average: 4% growth/change a year*

   in the next fiscal year *17* (FY 82) — in three years *18* (FY 84)

   in two years *18* (FY 83) — in four years *19* (FY 85)

   F. Is continuing education or the Associate Degree specifically mentioned as a promotion criterion in agency personnel procedures?

   yes *3* — no *9* — other *3*

   G. If yes or other, please give details: _____

   (a) *tuition reimbursement*

   (b) *human development associate credential*

4. Agency Personnel Profile:

   A. How many persons that supervise or manage the delivery of health services as their primary responsibility are employed by the agency currently who possess less than an Associate Degree? *total: 240*

   B. How many persons that supervise or manage the delivery of health services as their primary responsibility are employed by the agency currently who do not possess a management credential? *total: 350*

   C. Would the agency encourage, through released time, financial support, or other means, the personnel included in A or B above to enroll in a Health Services Management Associate Degree or Certificate program?

      yes *12* no *3*

   D. If a position requiring the supervision or management of the delivery of health services became available, would your agency consider employing a person possessing the Associate Degree or Certificate in Health Services Management?

      yes *11* no *4** **experience promotion eligibility list internal promotion*

5. Agency Financial Data:

   A. What is the current entry level salary with the agency for those persons that supervise or manage the delivery of health services as their primary responsibility? *$11,240 (FY 81) average*

   B. What is the current entry level salary with the agency for those individuals if they hold the Associate Degree or Certificate (if different from A. above)? *$12,000 (FY 81) average -- 7 respondents report a differential*

MHP:slk
10/24/79

HAGERSTOWN JUNIOR COLLEGE APPENDIX B

Merchandising Program

Business and Industry Survey

The purpose of this survey is to help HJC determine community awareness of and need for its Merchandising Program.

1. Respondent's name _____

2. Company name _____

3. Phone number _____

4. How many people are employed by your company? _____

5. When you hire people, what kind of educational qualifications are required?

   A. _____ 4-year college degree

   B. _____ 2-year college degree

   C. _____ Some college

   D. _____ High school graduate

   E. _____ 10-11 years of school

6. How many of your employees are involved directly in marketing, merchandising, or sales activities? _____

7. Assuming that present economic conditions improve, how many additional employees do you plan to hire each year for the next three years?

   1983 _____ 1984 _____ 1985 _____

8. How do you usually obtain new employees?

   _____ advertising _____ vo-tech centers

   _____ employment services _____ walk-ins

   _____ colleges or junior colleges _____ other

9. Does your company have any problem finding qualified employees?

   _____ yes _____ no

10. If yes, for what specific job(s)? _____

_____

_____

_____

11. Does your company have a training program for

new employees? _____ yes _____ no

present employees? _____ yes _____ no

Comments: _____

_____

_____

12. Could the training for new or present employees be done by the junior college if the proper equipment and teachers were available?

_____ yes _____ no

13. Would you encourage your employees, through released time or other means, to enroll in a merchandising associate degree program?

_____ yes _____ no

Comments: _____

_____

14. Would you be willing to help your employees meet tuition expenses?

_____ yes _____ no

15. Are you familiar with HJC's Merchandising Program?

_____ yes _____ no

Comments: _____

_____

16. Are there specific courses in the program (see enclosed brochure) which would benefit your company? _____ yes _____ no

Please list courses and comments.

_____

_____

_____

17. Would you be willing to use cooperative work experience students from the college in your company?

_____ yes _____ no _____ depends

If you checked "depends" above, please describe the conditions.

_____

_____

_____

18. What changes in the program (see enclosed brochure) would make it more useful to your company? _____

_____

_____

_____

* * *

Thank you for your assistance. Please return this survey to

Dr. Michael H. Parsons
Hagerstown Junior College
751 Robinwood Drive
Hagerstown, MD 21740

MHP:slk
February 1982

QUESTIONNAIRE ASSESSMENT APPENDIX C

Number sent out: 81 Number returned: 34 (42%)

Relevant Responses

4. Total number of employees: 1,054

5. Educational qualifications:

A.	3	5.5%
B.	5	10%
C.	7	14%
D.	24	47%
E.	9	18%
Not applicable	3	5.5%

6. 544 (61% of #4)

7. New employees:

1983	1984	1985
38 (6% of #6)	47 (7.3% of #6)	44 (6.8% of #6)

9. Problems locating qualified employees:

yes -- 7 (22%) no -- 25 (75%) no answer -- 1 (4%)

12. HJC conduct training?

yes -- 13 (40%) no -- 17 (53%) no answer -- 3 (9%)

13. Encourage employees to enroll?

yes -- 18 (53%) no -- 12 (35%) no answer -- 4 (12%)

14. Help with tuition?

yes -- 8 (24%) no -- 24 (70%) no answer -- 2 (6%)

16. Specific courses of interest?

yes -- 18 (53%) no -- 12 (35%) no answer -- 4 (12%)

Courses suggested:

MER 101 -- 10
MER 102 -- 8
MER 104 -- 8
SPD 108 -- 7
BUS 101 -- 5
MGT 201 -- 5
MAT 105 -- 3
BUS 203 -- 2

Mentioned once:
DPR 101
MER 205
ENG 105

17. Use co-op student?

yes -- 7 (20%) no -- 5 (15%) Depends* -- 22 (65%)

*on a part-time basis...
on hours available, costs, need...
on retailer's obligations...
on approval by area supervisor and vice president
on attitude and potential of the student

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
96 Powell Library Building
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

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